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Editorial Notes

The last issue of the "Christian Advocate," of Nashville, the "connectional organ" of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has on its front page a fine picture of Dr. Cuyler, the Presbyterian minister who recently died. The recognition by one denomination of the men and work of another is a beautiful manifestation of the unity of God's people.

"The Westminster" comes near hitting the nail on the head when it says: "The original idea of a convention was a gathering where men or women could freely interchange opinions, and where there should be much discussion and a little percussion. The present idea of a convention seems to be a gathering in which several noted speakers shall harangue the body for two or three days, after which it shall adjourn."

Complaint is heard, every now and then, that the church lacks leaders these days, that there are no special figures who stand at the front and are looked up to as the guiding minds of the church. It is well that it is so. Far better is it that there should be a democracy in our religious associations. The work of the church is done by the many, rather than by the few, and the distribution of the honor and reward instead of fixing them upon single men here and there tends to separate the work from the person and to give the glory to God.

At a mission meeting one preacher said to another: "Where have you been lately? I haven't seen you or heard of you, nor have I once seen your name in the papers." "No," was the reply, "I've been working the corners the past year." "What do you mean?" "Well, I found there were plenty of preachers in the city and towns, but the outlying districts where they were most needed were almost without them. So I left the city work and have been going from house to house, gathering people in little groups in farmhouses and school-houses, preaching to them and teaching them there. There seemed to be nobody to do that work so I took it up. I call that working the corners, and I guess my name hasn't been in the papers for a year."

One of our exchanges discusses the question of funeral services, very rightly objecting to eulogies of the deceased. Such addresses should be excluded. The nobler the man who lies in the coffin, the more he would object to fulsome laudation.

Long funeral addresses are no less out of place. Along with some selections of Scripture, a brief message of comfort to the bereaved (or in some cases of exhortation to be ready) is all that is needed. Brevity is golden.

On the other hand, it is possible to handle the Scriptures at a funeral service in such a way as to leave little comfort and little stimulation in piety. We have sometimes seen the pastor read from a book of texts, picked up here and there, from different parts of the Bible, without connection and without coherence: and at the end of the service not one of them had left any special impression upon the hearer. Should not the pastor always aim in such a service to impress some one helpful thought?

Some years ago, while spending a week in a town in Indiana, we took occasion to worship with each of its three churches. In not one of them did we hear a confession of sin or an expression of penitence. In one case the sermon involved the question of how to be saved: but in it there was no suggestion of the guilt of sin or the need of repentance. We found no explanation; we simply were painfully aware of the fearful omission.

In some of our contemporary journals, week by week, there is printed a form of prayer for use by its readers. The plan is a good one. But alas! many of these prayer-forms omit all confession of sin. They contain no petition for forgiveness, and no appeal to atoning blood. Over and over has this omission recurred till it becomes conspicuous. Why?

King Edward has issued an order that there shall be no more public entertainments in theatres, music halls and the like throughout England on Sunday, Christmas Day or Good Friday. Mayor McClellan, of New York City, on the day before Christmas, revoked the licenses of some five hundred moving picture shows as a result of an investigation by himself and others which had disclosed a general disregard of the fire laws and the frequent exhibition of immoral and demoralizing pictures. Magistrates who are faithful to duty and unselfishly courageous can secure obedience to law, and do much for the welfare of the community, economically, socially and morally. The fact is that brave and outspoken protest against evils by citizens of character and standing will drive out the men who for gain are willing to debase the morals of the people, destroy the Sabbath and sweep the youth down to destruction.